

Wrestling Perspective

• Analysis and Commentary From The McLaughlin Group of Professional Wrestling •

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Wrestling Perspective's Year End Awards

One year ago, we got together and mapped out the plans for Wrestling Perspective. At the time, we were two fans who wanted to express our opinions on our mutual love: professional wrestling. Prior to the creation of this newsletter, we would spend hours each week discussing wrestling. Paul came up with the idea of starting our own newsletter and after overcoming some hesitation, David agreed. We wanted to do something unique. We hope we've achieved that goal. since we started, we have received many complimentary reviews and recently our circulation hit the three figure level. 12 issues; it didn't seem possible, but we are celebrating our one year anniversary. We want to thank you, the readers, who subscribe to Wrestling Perspective because without your support, we would not be able to share our views on this business with the rest of the world. We've come a long way in one year and we intend to grow even more in the years to come. Below, we have compiled our year end selections in 12 categories that we think are important areas in our sport. Once again, thank you for your support.

Wrestler of The Year

Dave - Curt Hennig. Hennig elevated himself to the best wrestler in the business last year. Some may say he is a good wrestler who takes a great bump, but I disagree. His matches were the most enjoyable of 1990, especially his feud with Tito Santana and his Main Event match with the Big Bossman. He can do it all. He has excellent ring presence and has a great knowledge of wrestling science. Lex Luger is second on my list. He showed tremendous improvement and if pushed properly, could be one of the best this year.

Paul - Ric Flair. Despite everything the NWA tried to do to him in 1990, Flair was still the most important wrestler in the organization as well as the best wrestler in the country. His matches were, with only a few exceptions, consistently fantastic. Flair may be getting older, but he's lost little and in 1990 was without a peer. Jumbo Tsuruta gets second as he had excellent matches and at a time when the promotion needed it, he put the promotion's interests ahead of his own.

Tag Team of The Year

Dave - The Midnight Express. I find it amazing that a team on the verge of being fired, therefore suffering from low morale and a lack of enthusiasm, would have the most exciting tag team matches of the year. Bobby Eaton continues to be the best tag team wrestler in the business while Stan Lane proved he is one of the most charismatic people in the business even though he rarely said a word. Add their talents with Jim Cornette and you've got the Tag Team of The Year. It's unfortunate that they are no longer together, but that doesn't discount their excellence during 1990. The Steiners and Doom were two strong contenders for the top spot.

Paul - The Midnight Express. The Midnight Express elevated tag team wrestling to a plateau in 1990 that was only superseded by the NWA management's incompetence. The Steiners were a solid number two, but I believe they are a synergistic combination for as good as Scott is, I really believe he is more effective with his brother than he will be as a singles wrestler. The Rockers get the third spot. Shawn Michaels is outstanding and Marty Jannetty certainly doesn't hold him back. The prospect of them feuding with the Midnight Express, the Southern Boys and the Steiners is enough to beg the NWA to bring them in.

Most Improved Wrestler of The Year

Dave - Ron Simmons. He and Scott Steiner are the next two major superstars in wrestling. Simmons learned so much this year by working with Butch Reed and Teddy Long. He is a solid worker and a legitimate tough guy who can mix it up with the best of them. He has so much potential, it's frightening. Most people agree, he will be a top babyface in the business before long.

Paul - Butch Reed. Really, he should be the comeback player of the year, but not only did he rebound from his 1988 & 89 performances, he rose to a new level he never previously attained. Part of it was working with the Steiners, Ric Flair and Arn Anderson. Part of it was working with Ron Simmons. The other part must have been the sheer desire to excel. Ron Simmons is a close second as his potential finally started to be tapped. The man has a long solid career ahead of him if politics don't get in the way. He may not have Scott Steiner's moves, but he is solid, loaded with potential, charismatic and can do a much better interview. Superstardom is within his grasp.

Most Deteriorated Wrestler of The Year

Dave - Jim Duggan. It's hard to believe, but Hacksaw got even worse last year. Having him face Sgt. Slaughter and team with Nikolai Volkoff certainly didn't help matters. He is sloppy, slow and embarrasses me as a fan every time I see him. Andre the Giant ran a very close second. If it was the most deteriorated body award, the Giant would have been the runaway winner.

Paul - Sting. While important to the NWA in 1990, he went from spectacular in 1989, to another man for Flair to carry in 1990. His injury certainly played a part in that, but so did his attitude. When motivated Sting has shown promise this year, but his attitude has prevented that from happening on any regular basis. If there were an award for worst attitude, Sting would win that as well. Jim Duggan gets second, for as bad as he was in 1989, he was worse in 1990.

Most Underrated Wrestler Of The Year

Dave - Bobby Eaton. It is only within the past two months that Eaton has received recognition as one of the best in the business. However, through most of 1990, he, along with Lane, were virtually ignored and still provided more action packed matches than anyone else in the company. Mike Rotunda finishes second in this category. It's hard to understand why such a talented wrestler was not used in 1990. His career took a turn for the better with the creation of Michael Wall Street towards the end of the year, but he has since left the promotion.

Paul - Tito Santana. The WWF has a great wrestler whom they have buried beyond belief. His matches with Curt Hennig were fantastic, his performance at the WWF Tokyo Dome card was outstanding and he worked his tail off all year. Rather than push him, the WWF has forced him to carry talentless wrestlers like the Warlord to one star matches and do the job in the process. Brad Armstrong gets second as he is just as talented as Santana and almost as overlooked. It's amazing more fans don't get into his matches, but I believe that is more the result of a negative push than Armstrong's charisma. Tim Horner gets third for

the same reasons as Armstrong. Perhaps this year the Lighting Express will be revived and pushed properly, maybe as heels. They would certainly be more enjoyable to watch against the Steiners and the Southern Boys than the Freebirds.

Most Overrated Wrestler Of The Year

Dave - Stan Hansen. I can't understand why a guy who can only brawl is hailed as a great wrestler. I find his matches to be uninspiring, unless he's in there with a major talent. Buddy Landell was a close second. Although many inside fans find him to be entertaining, I only laughed at his act once or twice all year. Apparently the NWA didn't think to highly of him either as he spent most of 1990 doing jobs and his future with the company doesn't look too bright.

Paul - Curt Hennig. How many of Hennig's matches were good. Not great, but good: the ones with Tito Santana and the Big Bossman, who are both excellent workers in their own right. His matches with Kerry Von Erich were poor and the ones with the Ultimate Warrior weren't any better. Meanwhile, Ted DiBiase was able to carry the Warrior to much better matches. Hennig's charisma is suspect at best, particularly as a babyface, his psychology is weak and his interviews are poor. He is a good wrestler, but there is more to being a great wrestler than overselling an opponent's offense. Hennig is good, but he has been hailed by many as the second coming. If that's the case, then why do most of his matches, if you'll pardon the colloquialism, suck? Stan Hansen gets second. He is a solid brawler, but his matches with Lex Luger weren't anything special. If he is as good as many claim he is, he shouldn't need Japan or Terry Funk to have an outstanding match. Buddy Landell gets third for the reasons Dave mentioned and as far as the suggestion of replacing Stan Lane with Landell to form a new Midnight Express, don't make me laugh.

Best On Interviews

Dave - Jim Cornette. In 1990, no one came close to giving the interviews Cornette did. He was also a joy to listen to when he did color. Always thinking and coming up with something new, he reminded me of Roddy Piper during the early and mid 1980's. Arn Anderson finished second. His interviews always had a point and he was very intimidating to listen to.

Paul - Tony Atlas. Atlas' role as the ICW Champion heel stud was perfect. His interviews were creative, funny, entertaining, convincing and threatening. It is a shame that few people got to see his interviews as I firmly believe he would have won the Observer's Best Interview award if enough people saw him. Vince McMahon must have seen the creativity and decided it had to be removed. Why else would he come up with such a moronic character for Atlas in the WWF. Ole Anderson gets second as Uncle Remus was the master story teller and made the Horsemen turn work. His monologues were entertaining, fun and effective. Unfortunately, he was phased out during the summer and his Black Scorpion interviews are not included as they were something that needn't be discussed. Arn Anderson gets third as he was consistently excellent throughout the year, but never hit the highs Atlas and Ole did.

Match Of The Year

Dave - The Midnight Express vs. The Southern Boys, Bash PPV. This match had everything: comedy, drama, intensity and excitement. The only match last year to tell a story. The spots in the match from Jim Cornette and Nick Patrick to the karate set up with Stan Lane and Tracy Smothers came off extremely well. Far and away the best match of the year, and yes, I did see Riger vs. Sano. Second place went to Lex Luger vs. Ric Flair at WrestleWar. It may have won except for the finish. This match also had a great deal of drama, was extremely intense, but is also had a terrible ending.

Paul - Jushin Riger vs. Naoki Sano, January 31 1991 & Midnight Express vs. Southern Boys, Bash PPV. I don't think there was a match that came close to Riger vs. Sano in terms of an actual wrestling and flying display. Breathtaking moves, an outstanding confrontation and solid action from bell to bell. The only problem was there wasn't enough build up for the finish. The Midnight Express vs. The Southern Boys had everything Dave mentioned and more. Several false finishes, a martial arts display and outstanding work by all four participants made this one of the most enjoyable matches I've ever watched. I can't rate either one as better than the other as they were two entirely different matches that excelled in what they were trying to do, thus the tie. Third goes to the Midnight Express vs. the Rock and Roll Express at WrestleWar. With their jobs on the lines, all four men proved when it comes to tag team wrestling, they don't come any better.

Announcer Of The Year

Dave - The Freebirds. I know they do color, but they are so entertaining and get every angle over that I have to give them the nod. I really have to give Jimmy Garvin a lot of credit since this was relatively new to him and he did an amazing job. They are able to get over the wrestlers and are incredibly funny. The Southern Boys from Wisconsin had me in stitches for weeks. Tony Schiavone was runner up. He was able to excel in both the WWF and the NWA. He does not grate on you and let's the matches speak for themselves.

Paul - Tony Schiavone. Smooth, consistent and always entertaining, even when he calls a match by himself. He may not be the hardcore play by play announcer Jim Ross is, but over the long haul, he is much more pleasant to listen to as he is rarely grating. Jim Ross gets second. At times he can be the best, particularly if a match is good, but force him to cover a match without a color commentator and he sounds disinterested and is ineffective. Lance Russell gets third, if only for his ability to work with the Freebirds without quitting his job. The Freebirds are fun, but imagining trying to keep your composure working with them.

Rookie Of The Year

Dave - Steve Austin. No one else impressed me. Austin looked like a veteran in the ring, but he did work with his teacher, Chris Adams, for most of the year. If I had to vote for second place, I would choose El Gigante due to his hype alone.

Paul - Steve Austin. The man has a great deal of potential and showed so much for a rookie that he has to get the vote. Second goes to Chris Candito. I only saw one match with him, but that was enough. He has great composure, mannerisms and is smooth. On top of that, he is only 18. Glen Routh gets third. I only saw two matches with him: one where he did some nice flying and the other was a squash that Dave Meltzer described as the old Nikita Koloff/Sam Houston style matches. He has tremendous potential.

Manager Of The Year

Dave - Jim Cornette. He works harder than any other manager going. He's intelligent, funny and obviously loves the business. Cornette is the master when it comes to interviews and setting up angles. Teddy Long finishes second. I expect him to win this award next year.

Paul - Jim Cornette. Simply the best. You already know all of the reasons, so that pretty much sums it up. Bobby Heenan gets second. Still fresh and funny after all these years, it's simply amazing. He generates more heat than any other manager in the WWF. Teddy Long gets third. He has tons of potential and yet he is already the third best in the business. He needs to decide what role he is going to play, but once he finally carves out his niche, he may be able to crack the top two.

Awe Inspiring Wrestler Of The Year

Dave - Curt Hennig. Again, Hennig showed he's the best in 1990. Bobby Heenan was the final piece to the perfect puzzle. Hennig was finally given the recognition he so greatly deserves last year. Two strong Intercontinental Title reigns and several hot feuds were the only thing that kept me interested in the WWF in 1990. Luger and Scott Steiner, who both had great years, round out the top three.

Paul - Jushin Riger. Anyone who has seen any of Riger's matches knows why I chose him first. No one does the types of moves he does. A fantastic flier and a solid wrestler, whom I have yet to see in a poor match. Simply incredible. Bobby Eaton gets second as he is the most consistent wrestler in the U.S. and by that I mean consistently excellent. He has a great repertoire, takes awesome bumps and is a great flier. The only thing holding him back from being the best wrestler in the world is his charisma, and I really think he has a lot more than he gets credit for. Given the proper push, he could be a believable world champion. Ric Flair gets third. He is the best wrestler in the world, but repetitive. He rarely has an off night, can carry bad opponents to great matches and really has no peer. He just doesn't have the breathtaking moves or outstanding consistency of the top two.

War, What Is It Good For... Business

By - Paul J. MacArthur

The situation in the Persian Gulf is not humorous and should not be taken lightly. My life, the lives of my friends and family could all be dramatically and permanently altered should this war turn into another Vietnam. I don't wish anyone to lose their lives as a result of this war, but it is far too late for that wish to ever materialize. Instead, I can only wish the casualties and injuries from this war are minimized. Political leanings aside, I truly believe that is something we all hope for.

I know two people who are in the military. Neither is in the Persian Gulf and given their respective positions, it is unlikely that either will go there. I have no friends or family there but, if this war escalates and the draft is reinstated, both Dave and I could end up in the Persian Gulf. I don't know what it is like to go to war. I have no desire to find out. The only relative I have who served in the military is my uncle. He spent time in Vietnam, though he rarely talks about it. Given the horror stories of Viet Nam and how our country has treated Viet Nam veterans, I can't say that I blame him. It isn't exactly family reunion conversation.

The current situation in the Persian Gulf is not to be taken lightly. Everyday, people are losing their lives, their family, their friends and their homes. It will change the lives of many, few for the better. We all have a stake in this war and all of our opinions are valid, regardless of how we choose to express them. However, supposedly the premise of this war was the liberation of Kuwait from Iraq. Supposedly we are fighting so that the people of Kuwait may have the same freedoms we enjoy. Yet, what has been lost in all the patriotic fervor is people will make money from this war, lots of money. It is part of living in a free capitalist society. While many are sacrificing their lives, we continue to enjoy that right. It's a right many have died for in the past and will die for in the future. We should never lose the right of free trade. As distasteful as profiting from this war may be, if an entrepreneur provides a product the public desires during wartime, do we have any right to infringe on his business? Doesn't all economic theory base itself on supply and demand? If there is a demand, should we chastise the suppliers for meeting the demand or praise them for sound business savvy? Finally, if the demand was created by the supplier, does that make it any less acceptable or does it merely demonstrate a sharp business mind?

Vince McMahon Jr. has taken the Persian Gulf situation and manipulated it for his own financial gain. That point is not debatable. Instead, the debate has centered on the issue of how far is too far and has the WWF crossed that line with its exploitation of the Persian Gulf War. Many writers have forcefully expressed their distaste for the angle and there has been a major amount of backlash involving Titan Sports, The National Sports Daily and Dave Meltzer. However, the true issue is not the smokescreen Titan has used to limit open discussion on the Sgt. Slaughter/Iraq connection, but given the current situation in the Persian Gulf, does the Slaughter/Iraq connection cross the invisible line of poor taste in professional wrestling?

From the onset of this debate, most have chastised the WWF for its exploitation of the situation. The primary argument has been that it takes a lower form of life on the food chain to profit from the deaths in the Persian Gulf. However, if that logic is true, think of how many people have lost their position on the food chain. CNN has provided up to the minute coverage of the Persian Gulf War from its onset. The coverage has been fascinating and informative. They have provided a service for which there was a demand and a direct need. They have also experienced a tremendous upswing in their ratings and subsequently their revenue. Their promotional advertisements include highlights of the Persian Gulf War and indicate they are the only place for the latest breaking news in the Persian Gulf. They are making money from this situation, even though some of their reporters are risking their lives. Are they a lower life form doing this? Ditto ABC, CBS and NBC? National Public Radio has taken out full page advertisements in USA Today as the place to turn for the most in depth coverage of the Persian Gulf War including analysis/talk programs about the war. Are they lower forms of life for providing this service? Before the argument that NPR is a non-profit entity comes into play, realize every single NPR affiliate will use NPR's coverage of the Persian Gulf War as a selling point during membership drives. No one can claim CNN, ABC, NBC, CBS, NPR and the local radio and television stations aren't fulfilling a need, but they are also businesses using the Persian Gulf War to maintain and increase their profitability. Is there anything wrong with that? If not, is it because of the service they provide? If so, did they not create the demand for this service during Vietnam? Prior to Vietnam, no one expected in depth television coverage of a war. Now it is not only expected, but demanded. If they have created the demand, is there anything wrong with them fulfilling the demand, particularly if it is to inform and entertain the public?

You can buy a flag at supermarket checkout's now. You couldn't do that a few months ago. Is that wrong? Is fulfilling a patriotic need, as was done at the Superbowl, to wave the flag wrong? Who created the need? Was it a situation where the public demanded something and the suppliers responded or vice versa? Or was it somewhere in between? What category do Desert Storm T-Shirts fall into? What category do peace signs and anti-war posters and T-Shirts fall into? They too are fulfilling a need for those who do not support the war. Are the T-Shirt makers, flag makers and poster makers any better or worse than the networks? They too entertain and provide an outlet for expression? For that matter, what of those who sell Iraqi flags solely for the purpose of being burned? At what point is the line drawn? How far is too far? As long as there is no misrepresentation for the service provided, can we honestly ostracize those who choose to profit and fulfill a need?

Professional wrestling is not a news organization. It is entertainment. It has no more obligation to address the Persian Gulf War than does the Cosby Show. It has some parallel with the supermarket that sells flags or the store that sells T-shirts and posters as it can provide an outlet for expression if it chooses to do so. Yet, pro wrestling is not a stagnant medium like posters, T-Shirts and flags are. There are similarities, but there are far too many differences to make an apt comparison. The real parallel, however, is with television entertainment and the movies. Professional wrestling is a form of theater. It is not pure theater and it is not pure sport. Rather, a hybrid of the two. However, it shares more with the entertainment world than anything else. Thus, the true comparison should be with the entertainment industry.

Is the Slaughter/Iraq angle any different than John Wayne's World War II movies? Numerous war movies were made during World War II that capitalized on the war for their own financial gain. No one was forced to pay and see these movies. Three of the most critically acclaimed movies of the late 70s and 80s were *The Deer Hunter*, *Apocalypse Now* and *Platoon*. They were about Vietnam and thus they capitalized on our fears and misunderstandings of a war we never fought to win. Was there anything wrong with that? There will be a number of war movies released over the next few months and certainly, made for television movies about the Persian Gulf War will appear while the war is still in progress. Is that wrong? Was there anything wrong with Wayne playing the part of the total patriot and then making a fortune from the war movies he made? Are McMahon and Hulk Hogan any different from the movie studios and Wayne? What is the difference between this scenario and any other pro United States war movie? After all, in the end, we win the big one. Hogan is portraying the patriot who will defeat the Iraqi sympathizer. Some have scoffed at Hogan's trip to military bases as an attempt to strengthen his image, but did that in any way lessen the enjoyment of the troops and families who met him? No one doubted John Wayne's patriotism, but many doubt Hulk Hogan's. Is Hogan a patriot? His actions after Wrestlemania VII will be the barometer.

For decades, wrestling has had its share of Nazi and Japanese heels. They have long been accepted as wrestling characters. Yet, the proliferation of Japanese and Nazi heels happened after World War II was over. The distinction has thus been made, that there were no American lives being lost when these characters appeared. However, what is the difference? Did the lives of these soldiers become any less important once the war was resolved? Did our victory in World War II really lessen the pain of those who lost loved ones? Why was it more acceptable to exploit the war when it was over than when the battles still raged on? For that matter, wasn't it worse to exploit such xenophobia after the war? After all, the war was over. We won and it was time to move on. Either it is blatantly wrong to exploit a war, or it is not. How long ago a war happened doesn't make those who lost their lives any less dead. It in no way fulfills the dreams they never had a chance to capture. Time may heal, but one never truly gets over the loss of a loved one. Thus, if we accept the evil Nazi, the evil Japanese or for that matter the evil Russian, we must accept the Slaughter/Iraqi scenario, no matter how immediate the threat and no matter how painful the situation. To do otherwise would require the application of a double standard.

Some have defended the use of Nazi, Iranian and Japanese heels by saying they served as a catharsis for our emotions surrounding those situations (though I'd like to hear one Japanese American who spent time in one of our "camps" tell me the Japanese heels served as anything but a reminder of our own ignorance). What makes Slaughter/Hogan any different? It's just more timely. It will draw more people and thus provide a catharsis for more people. Isn't that a good thing? Isn't it better to hate our enemy during the war than after the war is over? Allowing wrestling fans to vent their anger towards a nation with whom we are at war without actually causing anybody any harm seems like a good thing. Yet, who really believes McMahon cares about the psychological effects this angle will have on his audience? Who really believes McMahon cares about a catharsis? Is that really the issue? In a way it is. There is a double standard here and it is not McMahon applying it, rather it's the inside fan.

One of the most lauded promoters in pro wrestling history is Bill Watts. He treated his wrestlers with respect and received respect from his wrestlers. He treated the fans with respect and his promotion flourished. He was inventive and demanded a high standard of work from his employees. Watts, however, had a penchant for exploiting xenophobic angles that were rarely subject to sharp criticism because the rest of his product was so solid. If McMahon, Ole Anderson or Dusty Rhodes attempted to use the same type of xenophobic angles Watts did, they would be crucified, then tried. Yet, Watts could get away with it today because inside fans love him. The same fans despise McMahon. Thus, he is subject to a much higher degree of scrutiny and criticism than any other promoter. Success breeds jealousy and contempt. McMahon is proof of that. Presently, his product

may be terrible, but that does not justify ostracizing him any worse than one would Watts were he to attempt a similar angle to make money. Bill Watts may be a patriot. Vince McMahon may be a patriot, he may not. However, McMahon has every right to exploit the situation as Watts would - and don't lie to yourself and say Watts wouldn't - without being subject to any stronger criticism. There is no way we can justify the application of such a double standard. If we do, we are no better than those we criticize.

How far is too far? The arsonist? The rapist? The ax murderer? The wife beater? The abortionist? The pornographer? Are any of these any worse than the racists portrayed by the Horsemen this summer and Ted DiBiase the past few months? Need we be reminded of Howard Beach to remember racism still kills in this country? Wasn't the DiBiase angle overlooked because everyone was tired of discussing racism after castigating Anderson this summer? Wasn't it overlooked because the Slaughter/Iraq issue was something new? Are any of these scenarios worse than Hogan atomic dropping Sherri Martel or the Ultimate Warrior military pressing and throwing her out of the ring? Isn't the abuse of women a major problem in our society? What's next, the child molester as a babyface?

The fact is, all of these ideas are disgusting. Racists, murderers, women beaters and child molesters are all beneath contempt. We have no need for them in society and certainly no need for them in the escapist world of professional wrestling. Resorting to such tactics in order to be successful isn't necessary. Contrary to popular belief, it has been done. A wrestling promoter needn't lower himself to the level of the most ignorant and evil to be successful. What good are the spoils if they are ill-gotten? Yet, our society gives us the right to choose. The right to make money honestly and with integrity. It also allows us the option to make money through exploitation and deceit. We have the ability to circumvent the mechanisms designed to keep us from cheating our fellow man. Thus, in the end, the moral choice is ours. The moral choice in professional wrestling is made by the promoters and the participants. It is time they realize they have this choice. It is time they look themselves in the mirror and ask if they are making the right choice. In the end, every wrestler and every promoter knows in their hearts if they are doing the right thing.

Vince McMahon has freely chosen to exploit the Persian Gulf War, and resultantly those who die in the war, for his own financial gain. It is no better than exploiting the festering problems of racism, sexism, and xenophobia. Alas, as disgusting as this angle may be, it is no worse. If we are truly sincere with our disgust with the WWF's Persian Gulf exploitation, then we must look within ourselves and make sure we find equal contempt for the above mentioned problems, for if we do not, we may be the victims of these problems. Or worse yet, the perpetrators.

Sidelines

Sorry We're Late - This issue was supposed to be in the mail by the last week in January, but a case of food poisoning and the time to complete the War article prevented it from happening. The February issue should be out the last week of February or the first week of March. The March issue should finally be on time as that should be out by the last week of March barring any unforeseen circumstances. Thanks for your patience and understanding.

The Wrestling Observer Newsletter is without a doubt, the best newsletter available today. While we are almost positive everyone who reads *Wrestling Perspective* reads the Observer, on the off chance some of you do not or have let your subscription run out, we'd like to reiterate it is the top newsletter in the field. Dave Meltzer has an inside track and knowledge of the business that is without competition. The February 4, 1991 issue was one of the most important and best written newsletters we've ever seen. Our highest recommendation. The Wrestling Observer is available at a cost of \$6.00 for four issues from PO Box 1228, Campbell, CA 95009-1228.

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Letters To The Editors

Your piece on the WWF refugees was very good. My only question is this - Who's identity would the NWA assume by taking on so many of the WWF's rejects? Since the performers, regardless of work rate, are generally more well known by the casual fans than their longtime NWA counterparts, would the NWA be viewed as an extension of the WWF, or would the wrestlers be successfully assimilated into the NWA philosophy (whatever that is), especially in light of the current booking situation? I would like to see the NWA pick up Valentine, Garvin and eventually, Rude. They could ably fill the niches you mentioned. However, I have severe reservations about Volkoff. Do they really need another "Dog" of a worker? I really don't think that a Volkoff/Iron Sheik feud would generate much heat. The singing of the National anthem would be a blatantly WWF-like move, and is usually the high spot of Volkoff's repertoire.

The piece on the long lamented AWA was quite perceptive. Since this was the promotion I grew up with, I have been saddened to see what Verne Gagne did to it - specifically completely destroying it.

I really don't have any respect of what Fritz Von Erich did to his promotion and to his own kids. Obviously, Mike and Chris never had any business being in the ring. Letting them beat anybody twice their size was as ridiculous as Verne letting his kid beat Bruiser Brody.

Whatever happened to your letters to the editors? I would think that your format in particular would elicit a considerable amount of reader response. I would be curious to see what the readers have to say, if anything, about my articles.

Vic Stanley
LaFayette, IN

P&D - The reason the Letters To The Editors section has been missing from a number of issues is that we receive very few letters in response to our articles. We wholeheartedly encourage reader response to the articles that appear in Wrestling Perspective and would like to see the Letters section as a continuing forum for debate. However, we can't do it if we don't receive any letters. Hence, this little guilt trip, if you will.

In my estimation the articles in issue #10 ranged from the ridiculous to the sublime with a couple of interesting stops in between. That lead article about the NWA reeling in WWF cast-offs was ill considered on two counts.

First, it seems to me you're aiming these ideas at the NWA brass rather than your readership - your peers, ie. smart fans. If you think Jim Herd or Jack Petrick gives a flying one about your ideas... well I doubt it. On the other hand, we're your bread and butter as well as the people who care about your ideas, so don't "dis" (sic) us by dreaming up nightmarish angles like Volkoff vs. Sheik. That one would certainly be a strong candidate for worst feud of the year.

Furthermore, WCW needs an identity of its own, not a reputation as a haven for WWF has-beens. Poor workers minus their gimmicks (which I believe McMahon owns) equals negative stars in anyone's book. If it's veterans you're looking for, there are other sources where guys haven't had their fighting spirit broken and whose age wouldn't automatically be translated into "over the hill."

OK, I've had my fun bashing you; now let me praise you. Your case documenting the value of the Midnight Express and their insensitive treatment by WCW management was masterful. You brought the injustice of this situation into sharp focus and snapped me out of the depression last year's Ricky Steamboat departure had me mired in. I'd rather be fighting mad than feeling bad. Thanks guys.

James Thistlewaite
Hoboken, NJ

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